

DRINKING WATER

NOTICES AND ADVISORIES

Indicator 3. Boil Water Notices and Advisories

Background The number of boil water advisories has risen dramatically in Kentucky. The increase is likely due to increased awareness on the part of public water systems to issue advisories when the potential for contamination occurs, most often during waterline breaks. In many areas, drinking water distribution systems have not been maintained, resulting in deterioration, leakage and failure. Some water systems in Kentucky lose as much as 50 percent of their treated water due to leaks and waterline breaks, according to reports filed with the Kentucky Public Service Commission. Deteriorating pipes not only can cause water loss, but can allow the infiltration of contaminants during pressure losses. Extended periods where the temperature is below freezing are also a major cause of line breaks.

Goal Ensure public drinking water can be safely consumed by ensuring that boil water advisories and notices are promptly issued.

Progress During 2000, there were 546 boil water advisories (issued when there is a potential for contamination) and 10 boil water notices (issued when bacteriological contamination is confirmed). This was a decrease from 1999, but still a dramatic increase as compared to earlier years. The Kentucky Division of Water generally attributes the rise to better education and awareness of water system operators to report potential contamination problems as well as more consistent reporting of waterline breaks. The number of consumer advisories has declined from a high of 14 in 1995 to one in 2000. The consumer advisory in 2000 was for potential contamination as a result of a broken water line near a gas station in Hindman, Ky.

During 2000, Pineville Water System led the state in notices/advisories with 53, followed by West Laurel Water Association (40), Olive Hill Municipal Water Works (33), Rattlesnake Ridge Water District (33) and Grayson Utility Commission (31).

Boil water notices and advisories typically last a few days. However, some communities have experienced long-term advisories. For example, Evarts in Harlan County has had a number of boil water advisories since 1994 due to turbidity problems. In August 1998, the city declared an emergency in order to be eligible for federal funding to resolve problems at the drinking water plant. Emergency funding was obtained to replace the finished water storage tank which was in imminent danger of failure. Bandana Water System in Ballard County has also been on a long-term consumer advisory for nitrate contamination of its groundwater source caused by runoff of agricultural chemicals. New wells were drilled in 1999 and 2000 and nitrate values are now within the MCL standard.

Measures - notes and sources

Measure 1. *Issued when there is potential for bacteriological contamination. **Issued when evidence shows bacteriological contamination. Source: Ky. Division of Water.

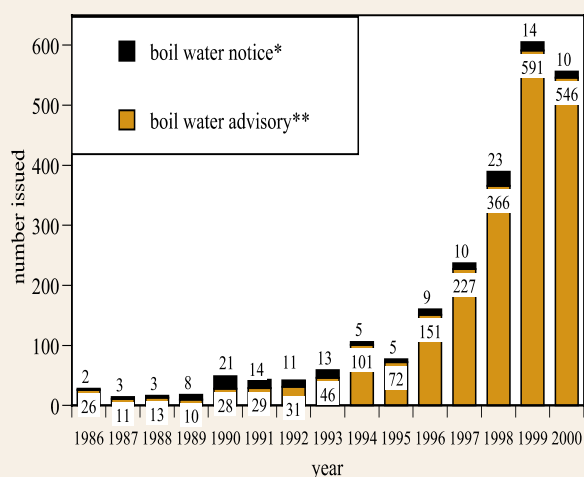
Measure 2. *Issued when adverse health effects from consumption of water are possible or when other information of interest to consumer exists. Source: Ky. Division of Water.

At a Glance

Number of boil water advisories/notices

1990.	52
1995.	91
2000.	556

Measure 1. Boil Water Advisories and Notices in Kentucky



Measure 2. Consumer Advisories in Kentucky

